

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 11, 2003. Claims 64, 66 to 72 and 77 to 79 remain in the application, with Claim 65 having been canceled. Claim 64 is the only independent claim. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

It is noted that this Amendment has been prepared in accordance with the Patent Office's revised format for amendments and therefore, where appropriate, waiver of the requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.121 is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to as allegedly not depicting the claimed disrupting means. Applicants wish to point out that the claimed disrupting means can be seen to correspond to reference numerals 531, 532 and 532B of Fig. 43. In this regard, while Applicants had indicated in the Second Preliminary Amendment dated April 26, 2002 that Claims 64 to 72 and 77 to 79 read on Species III (Figures 18 to 24), that indication was in error and it is respectfully submitted that Claims 64 to 72 and 77 to 79 read on Species IX (Figures 43, 45 and 46). Accordingly, no drawing change is believed to be required and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim 66 was objected to for an informality that has been attended to by amendment as recited above. Withdrawal of the objection to Claim 66 is respectfully requested.

Claims 64 to 72 and 77 to 79 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

As to the point 1) noted in the Office Action, as pointed out above, the claims read on Figures 43, 45 and 46 and the disrupting means can be seen to correspond to reference numerals 531, 532 and 532B.

Regarding point 2), Applicants submit that the claim is clear both on its face and when read in light of the specification. In particular, as described in detail at page 79, line 2 to page 85, line 21, the gas-liquid separating means can be seen to correspond to reference numeral 505 such that the claimed disrupting means (sealing member 532B) disrupts a midcoarse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage between the ink tank (by closing the ports 501B and 501C) and the gas permeable member 505. Thus, the claims are clear on their face and when read in light of the specification.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 112 rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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